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GUIDE

FOR MEAT GRADERS



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
LIVESTOCK DIVISION
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GUIDE FOR MEAT GRADERS

Foreword and Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to provide each USDA meat grader with a simple and convenient guide to important facts that he needs to know in performing his grading work. It will help him to do a better job and to understand the administrative and nontechnical aspects of his work, and his relationship to the Meat Grading program as a whole. It includes information which will assist the grader by pointing out duties and responsibilities by which he can improve the quality of his overall work performance.

The most effective means of gaining general acceptance of our meat grading service is through the support of satisfied applicants. They, in turn, reflect consumer demands for assurance of quality in meat, which is in keeping with prices paid. It is the policy of the Meat Grading Branch to improve the grading service through high quality work performance, prompt and effective response to all requests for information, demonstrations, and cooperative endeavor to increase confidence in, and desire for, meats graded according to U.S. Standards.

The first essential in conducting the Meat Grading Service is a thoroughly competent staff of supervisors and graders. By experience and training they are equipped with technical understanding and ability to apply uniformly the official Standards for grades of dressed meats. The methods of selecting, training, and supervising meat graders are the best that experience makes possible, and are under constant study for improvement.

The second essential is that every grader and supervisor be conversant with the administrative policies, procedures, and regulations which govern his activities. These policies, procedures, and regulations are contained in Administrative Regulations, Service and Regulatory Announcements; Department, AMS, Division, and Branch: Manuals; Circulars; Instructions; and Memoranda. Each field office is supplied with copies of such material and each grader is urged to familiarize himself with this information.

The Federal Meat Grading Service

The Federal Meat Grading Service is conducted by the Meat Grading Branch of the Livestock Division which is one of the seven important commodity divisions of the Agricultural Marketing Service in the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The Department is authorized by Congressional legislation to develop Official Grade Standards and to conduct a grading service. The broad objective of the Service is to facilitate the marketing of livestock and meats, according to nationally accepted quality standards. This serves the livestock producer, the consumer, and all intermediate segments of the trade.

The Federal Meat Grading Service grades meat according to Federal standards and applies the official grade stamp to carcasses and wholesale cuts of meats for those qualified dealers and agencies requesting the Service.

Federal Regulations and Standards for Grades of Meats

Rules and regulations governing the conduct of the Service and official U.S. Standards for grades of carcass meats are promulgated under authority delegated to the Secretary of Agriculture. They are

published as Service and Regulatory Announcements, commonly referred to as "SRA's." They are as follows:

1. SRA-98 (Revised). Rules and Regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture Governing the Grading and Certification of Meats, Prepared Meats, and Meat Products.
2. SRA-99. Official United States Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef.
3. SRA-114. Official United States Standards of Grades of Veal and Calf Carcasses.
4. SRA-123. Official United States Standards for Grades of Lamb Carcasses, Yearling Mutton, and Mutton Carcasses.

Supplementing SRA-AMS 99, which describes the typical or midpoint of each grade and the minimum requirements for some grades of carcass beef, is a manual in each supervisor's possession containing color photographs depicting reproductions of actual carcasses of varied weight ranges and maturity development for each grade. Each picture depicts the minimum of the grade, and an attached commentary explains various minimum combinations of the factors used in determining grade placements. The use of the picture book is restricted presently to the training of grading personnel and resolving protests by vendors regarding grade placements.

Each supervisor and grader is required to have copies of SRA's applicable to his work in his possession at all times. They are his technical guide and authority for determining the class and grade of a carcass. These descriptive Standards represent the combined judgment of highly trained Federal technicians, as well as that of wholesalers,

packers, producers, and other interested parties. The Standards take into account long established principles, practices, and nomenclature universally employed in the meat trade, and exclude those having only sectional significance. They are frequently reviewed by the Standardization Branch to assure that standards reflect modern production methods, current trade practices, and customer preferences.

The greatest problem in applying descriptive Standards uniformly throughout the Service is that of securing uniform interpretations of the descriptive Standards by all graders. The Standardization Branch is continually searching for and testing techniques that offer possibilities for clarification and unification of interpretations of all grade standards for livestock, meat, and meat products.

Graders Manual of Instructions

Each grader, upon entering the Service, is issued a manual containing numbered Branch instructions regarding grading procedures and other technical information. This information supplements the AMS Instructions which are maintained at all Main Station and Type I Substation offices and are available for reference by graders at those offices. Additions or amendments to these Branch instructions are issued as "Auxiliaries" and bear the number of the instructions they amend. They are to be inserted in the Manual in front of each applicable parent instruction.

From time to time, instructions of a one-time or temporary nature are issued to graders as "Notices." These "Notices" are issued in numerical order and should be kept separate from the numbered instructions.

Graders are expected to familiarize themselves with the contents of each instruction and notice issued to them.

History of Meat Grading Service

Federal Meat Grading was introduced in 1923 on a very small scale as a special service to the United States Shipping Board and Veterans Bureau hospitals, but was officially inaugurated for commercial service on May 2, 1927. This service was an advantage to the purchasing agency because it simplified purchasing practices resulting in substantial savings, greater convenience, and tended to eliminate substitution and deceptive practices.

In 1927, the Better Beef Association requested that the Department of Agriculture extend the program of Federal grading, by stamping the two highest grades of beef (Prime and Choice) for customer information. It was believed that grade stamping according to Official Standards would: (1) provide a reliable guide for consumers in selecting better quality meats, (2) encourage the consumption of better quality beef, and (3) reflect consumer preferences back to the producer.

For about one year the service was rendered free of charge by the Department as an experiment and demonstration. In July 1928, the Grading Service was made available, upon request, to slaughterers and marketing agencies at designated markets on a fee basis. The success of the demonstration period and the value of the Service to financially interested parties in the livestock and meat business irrespective of the change from free grading to a self-sustaining basis was evidenced by the consistent expansion of the Grading Service.

From a dozen graders at ten market center cities in 1928, the Service has continually expanded until, at the present time (June 1957) 34 years after its inception, the number of graders, including trainees and supervisory personnel has reached a total of 443, stationed throughout the country. Much of this increase is attributed to demands by all segments of the meat industry and consuming public for graded meats. This reflects confidence in the ability of the Meat Grading Service of which each grader is an integral part.

Importance of Uniform Interpretation and Application of Standards

The most difficult problem involved in grading meat on a national scale is to accomplish and maintain a uniform interpretation and application of the Grade Standards by a large staff of graders stationed throughout the nation. It is extremely vital that the highest possible degree of uniformity be attained since failure to do so would result in loss of confidence on the part of consumers and those who use our service. Such loss of confidence would seriously hamper the Meat Grading Service.

No mechanical yardstick can be used for measuring the primary factors, quality, conformation, and finish of a carcass. Therefore, uniformity in the interpretation and application of the Standards depends entirely upon the accuracy and uniformity of subjective judgments of highly skilled meat graders. Since no man has infallible judgment, differences in interpretation of the Standards among graders are bound to occur. These differences must be kept to an absolute minimum.

There are various means of detecting inaccuracies in grading, all of which are valuable for correcting errors of judgment on the part of the individual grader. The Grading Service follows a rigid system of selection, training, and supervision of graders in an attempt to confine differences and inconsistencies within narrow limits. Area supervisors frequently observe the work of their graders. Furthermore, supervisors and graders at large marketing centers review incoming graded meat and report on its uniformity of grade. In addition, the purchasing agents, stewards, dietitians, and housewives who use federally graded meats constitute a continuing, practical, and most effective "board of review." Industry itself exercises a potent influence through comparisons within the vast volume of federally graded and stamped carcasses which are constantly shipped from various points of origin to large central markets.

Even so, there is always room for improvement and further narrowing of differences as to interpretation of Standards between graders. Hence, every grader as a part of his duty, is expected to observe and report to his supervisor any differences which he observes in application of the Standards, whether between his own grading and that of fellow graders, or between other graders wherever located. Since it is recognized that various factors affect the judgment of all graders at times, such reports are necessary in order to keep our grading on a uniform basis. It is the responsibility of Main Station and Assistant Main Station Supervisors to maintain a high level of grading performance by their graders at all times. This can be accomplished only by the efficient supervision of the graders' work. Therefore, graders should be receptive to constructive correction by their supervisors for the good of the

Meat Grading Service. However, graders are required to accept instruction and correction only from their Main Station and Assistant Main Station Supervisors. It is important that this fact be fully understood and appreciated by every grader, and that each supervisor takes every opportunity to impress this important fact upon the graders under his supervision.

Organization and Supervision

The line of authority and responsibility for technical grading operations, or actual application of the Standards, stems from the Director of the Livestock Division to the Chief of the Meat Grading Branch, who is responsible for assuring accurate and uniform application of the Standards on a nationwide basis. The Chief of the Meat Grading Branch has the authority to make the final determination of the grade of meats and the application of U.S. Standards. He has two assistants. One assists him in the technical phases of grading and the other assists in directing the operation and management of the Service.

Under the Assistant Chiefs of the Branch, Assistant National Supervisors as representatives of the Chief of the Meat Grading Branch are responsible for technical accuracy of the grading and program procedure within the continental United States; they are members of the Washington staff, but for convenience and coverage, are headquartered at strategic markets throughout the nation. Most of their time is spent working with various Main Station Supervisors, their assistants, and other grading personnel from time to time.

Meat Grading Stations

There are three types of meat grading stations:

1. Main Station
2. Type I Substation
3. Type II Substation

The functions and responsibilities of these various types of stations are outlined in LS Instruction No. 104(S&G)-1. Each Main Station is headed by a supervisor who is directly in charge of that station and the Type I and Type II Substations assigned thereto. He is technically and administratively responsible to supervising officers for the accuracy of grading, related services, and program procedure of the Branch within his designated area.

Most Main Stations have one or more assistant supervisors, depending upon the volume of grading, the number of establishments at which grading is performed, and the number of graders supervised. Main Stations and Type I Substations generally operate as parts of Livestock Division consolidated offices, and are offices of record, maintaining control and issuing reports concerning conduct of the grading service.

Type II Substations may prepare their own certificates but fee bills, collections, and administrative reports are handled by the Main Station or Type I Substation to which the Substation is assigned.

Main Station Supervisors and Assistant Main Station Supervisors work closely with the graders under their supervision, reviewing their grading and correcting inaccuracies and inconsistencies so as to maintain uniform grading in line with the U. S. Standards. This reviewing of graders'

work by supervisors eliminates the possibility of repeated unsatisfactory work. Grading is continually reviewed at major markets and corrective measures, if necessary, are immediately instituted.

Qualification of Graders

For GS-7 meat grader applicants, a minimum of four years of experience is required, or a prescribed combination of education (a degree in Animal Husbandry in an accredited college) and one year of applicable experience. GS-9 applicants require one more year of experience than GS-7 applicants. Most graders have considerably more experience than the prescribed minimum. Their experience must have been obtained in buying, selling, or grading meats in large quantities at the wholesale level.

Applicants must be physically fit at the time of employment and capable of performing the duties of the position. A physical examination will be made by a Federal Medical officer or a federally designated medical examiner before appointment.

Trial Period

Under current regulations of the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Agriculture, initial appointments are on a conditional basis. Appointees serve a trial period of one year. During the period, the appointee is given extensive training in the interpretation and application of U. S. Standards, by supervisors and experienced graders. If, during the trial period, the appointee fails to demonstrate aptitude, ability, and satisfactory trade relations as a Federal meat grader, he may be dropped from the rolls. Re-employments are also on a conditional basis.

Performance Standards

The essential elements of the job of a Federal meat grader may be summarized in order of importance as follows:

1. Accuracy, consistency, and integrity displayed in interpretation and application of the Federal Standards for grades of meat.
2. Ability to convince applicants of the accuracy and fairness of the grades applied by using the word terminology used in the written Standards.
3. Effectiveness in promoting public understanding through demonstration as to the purpose of Federal meat grading.
4. Ability to establish and maintain favorable personal working relationships with the trade.

Number 1 is obviously the most important. The best possible performance under these elements involves a perfect understanding of the Standards, and an unerring accuracy and consistency in their interpretation and application under all conditions. It further involves absolute fearlessness, impartiality, with unshakable devotion to honesty of purpose regardless of pressure or complaints from applicants. Work thus performed gives rise to few protests or appeals.

Number 2 is also an essential to high quality performance. The ability to describe and effectively demonstrate the Standards as applied to controversial carcasses is very important. Most objections to grade determinations are traceable

to a lack of understanding of the distinctions between grades, and many protests and appeals can be avoided if the grader explains such distinctions clearly and effectively to the vendor. Thus supervisory assistance can be reduced to a minimum.

Number 3 is scarcely less important than Number 2. The best possible performance under this item involves, in addition to full knowledge and understanding of the Standards and ability to explain them to applicants, the ability to demonstrate grade placements in accordance with the standards at group meetings such as luncheon meetings of civic associations, boys and girls clubs, Parent-Teachers Associations, etc. It involves interest in and skillful use of devices such as bulletins, posters, color photographs, lantern slides, etc., in improving and spreading public understanding of the Grading Service.

Other important elements such as promptness, tact and courtesy, care of equipment, personal neatness, pleasing personality, good working relations with co-workers, and understanding and application of administrative regulations and procedures cannot be overlooked or minimized in setting performance standards for meat graders. However, it is reasonably certain that any grader who strives to become outstanding or better than average with respect to the four principal elements, will also meet these requirements.

It is the policy of the Grading Service that all supervisors and graders shall observe these standards, and endeavor to apply them on the job as well as in evaluating performance for performance rating purposes.

Performance Ratings

All employees of the Meat Grading Service are subject to periodic performance ratings. These ratings are required by law.

Performance is rated on the major duties of the position according to the requirements for those duties. The three ratings are Outstanding, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory. Outstanding ratings are accorded only when all aspects of performance not only exceed normal requirements but are outstanding and deserve special commendation. Satisfactory ratings are based on the satisfactory overall performance of the employee's duties for the period since the last performance rating was issued. An Unsatisfactory performance rating is issued when an employee has continued to perform his duties unsatisfactorily after being warned in writing that his work performance was inadequate.

Supervisors prepare letters of warning (See LS Instruction No. 365(S&G)-2) to graders regarding any shortcomings or intention of the rating officer to issue an unsatisfactory performance rating. Such letters of warning are issued a minimum of 90 days in advance of the date on which the rating will be given.

Standards of Conduct

Meat graders are sometimes subjected to pressures and temptations, calculated to influence their official actions, directly or indirectly. These pressures range all the way from favors such as social invitations, to actual bribes involving monetary considerations. Also, vendors sometimes threaten graders with various consequences in order to get meat graded into a higher grade.

Graders who permit themselves to be influenced by such actions will not be retained in the service. These pressures on the part of vendors are prohibited by our regulations and if encountered by the grader, should be reported to his supervisor. The policies and regulations relating to conduct and disciplinary actions appear in Agricultural Marketing Service Regulations, Division Instructions, and Instructions from the Branch, all of which are available at meat grading offices of record. Acceptance of bribes and certain other prohibited activities constitute violation of Federal statutes and may result in legal action against the employee.

Salaries and Promotions

Meat graders' salary rates are based on Civil Service wage scales established by Congressional legislation. Within grade promotion, subject to certain limitation, are granted at the end of each successive fifty-two week period providing work performance is satisfactory.

Graders are eligible for promotion to successively higher grades, as Assistant Main Station Supervisors, Main Station Supervisors, Assistant National Supervisors, etc. It is the policy of the Meat Grading Service to fill these positions by promotions from within the organization with employees who have demonstrated their fitness and qualifications for advanced responsibility. Supervisors in Grade GS-11 or above have a seventy-eight week waiting period between within grade promotions.

Transfers

While the needs and interests of the service are of paramount importance and merit first consideration, as far as practicable, graders' preferences

for assignments to specific locations will be given full consideration but all expenses for transfers made at the request of an individual grader shall be borne by the grader.

Leave

Meat grading personnel are subject to the uniform leave regulations of the Civil Service Commission as prescribed by Branch policy and instructions. They earn annual leave (A/L) with pay in accordance with their length of service but may not use leave earned during the first 90 days until the completion of that period. For service up to three years, employees earn 13 days A/L per year; those with three years but less than 15 years' service earn 20 days A/L per year; those with over 15 years' service earn 26 days A/L per year. All A/L earned within a leave year which cannot be carried over into the next leave year must be used as prescribed in the AMS Instruction on "Leave Regulations" or forfeited. All Meat Grading personnel earn sick leave at the rate of 13 days per year with no limitation as to the amount accumulated.

It is the policy of the Meat Grading Service that graders shall be allowed to take their leave as desired insofar as Service requirements will permit. However, inasmuch as the Service is financed entirely from fees collected for actual services performed, in contrast with other Federal agencies financed from appropriated funds, it is necessary that the personal wishes of individual graders be subordinated to such considerations as availability of a relief grader, pressure of work, and leave arrangements of the group. It is, therefore, necessary that supervisors schedule A/L as far in advance as possible, and concentrate the granting of leave within periods

of slack operations and at such time as would be in the best interest of the service.

Relations with Industry and with Other Government Agencies

Federal meat graders should maintain cordial relations with all patrons of the service and their employees, but must guard against any tendency to fraternize or show favoritism. Honesty, impartiality, and decorum are basic requirements of the Service, and there must be no exceptions. Uncertainty and indecision as to the values of grade factors are always looked upon by vendors as evidence of incompetence; on the other hand, quick decisions or snap judgments are often regarded as carelessness, and give cause for apprehension on the part of applicants as to the correctness of decisions. Meat Graders should exercise a happy medium between the two. When errors in grade placements are detected, whether in favor of or against the applicant, they should be corrected without hesitation before applying the roller brand. Stubbornness about raising a grade placement, when an applicant is entitled to a higher grade, is detrimental to the maintenance of good trade relationships between the grader and the applicant.

The grader must not criticize or talk about the business of one vendor to another. It is the grader's business to grade meat and not to express opinions about business practices. Records or information pertaining to grading is the property of the vendor, and the grader is not authorized to divulge it to outside parties except in connection with legal proceedings. Information about a patron's business secured in the course of duty should also be treated as confidential, and under no circumstances is it to be discussed with a

competitor. Borrowing money from patrons or otherwise becoming obligated to them, must be scrupulously avoided by graders.

Graders are sometimes assigned to perform grading or specification examination work for other Government agencies. Such agencies are patrons of the Service in the same sense as industry, and should be treated with the same courtesy and consideration. Responsibility for certain aspects of specification examination work for other Government agencies is sometimes shared with the Meat Inspection Branch of the Agricultural Research Service. Close cooperation and cordial working relationships with local meat inspectors are essential to the interests of both agencies.

Relationships with Other Meat Graders

Graders should avoid arguments in the presence of outsiders with other graders regarding grade interpretations or other matters relating to the Service. Such differences of opinion should be confined to private discussions or better still be referred to the supervising grader.

Supervisors and graders should avoid criticising other graders in the presence of persons outside the Service, and criticism of other graders by outsiders should be discouraged. The grader should inform those who complain of another grader's work that such complaints are to be referred to the supervisor. Relatively new or inexperienced graders should never hesitate to call upon supervisors or other experienced graders when in difficulty, and such assistance will be given freely in a spirit of cooperation.

It is the duty of every grader to be vigilant for apparent inaccuracies or inconsistencies in interpretations of the Grade Standards and to report such cases promptly, irrespective of their origin. As previously pointed out, this policy is dictated from motives of mutual helpfulness and improvement of the service, and should never be regarded as anything but constructive criticism.

Relationships to the Public

It is "John Q. Public" who ultimately pays the bill for the Grading Service, and who may be victimized by any inaccuracies or inconsistencies in the application of Grade Standards. He is therefore entitled to courteous attention, whether concerning the legibility of grade marks on retail cuts, or inquiries concerning the work of the Department of Agriculture in the whole field of livestock and meats. Requested information concerning application of the Official Standards, or any technical phase of the Grading Service, should be given freely and impartially. Opinions should be avoided; instead, requests for information on points with which the grader is not familiar should be promptly referred to the supervisor or other appropriate authority.

Certificates and Inspection Notes

The importance of the Official Meat Grade Certificate cannot be over-emphasized. It is the document which the patron receives as official authority for selling meats under U. S. Grades, and it is the basis for all financial and accounting transactions of the Meat Grading Service. When properly prepared and certified by an official meat grader, it constitutes prima

facie evidence, under the law, for the truth of information contained thereon.

The certificates are serially numbered, and every certificate must be accounted for officially in accordance with procedures prescribed in instructions of the Meat Grading Branch, which are available to every grader. Certificates must be issued or voided in accordance with those instructions.

Most graders prepare longhand notes in notebooks while in the coolers, from which official certificates are prepared later. This is a permissible, even desirable, practice, but such notes must be complete and legible, and should be retained either by the grader or in the station file for a reasonable length of time to support the certificate.

Court Testimony

Meat graders are sometimes called upon or subpoenaed to testify in court as expert witnesses in cases involving Official Meat Grade Certificates. They are expected and required to do so, but only in accordance with Department of Agriculture Administrative Regulations and policy. In addition, the supervisor must be notified, and clearance by the Branch Chief in Washington must be secured in advance. If necessary or desirable, arrangements will be made with a field office of the Solicitor of the Department to advise the grader concerning his appearance.

Testimony of meat graders, whether given in court, by affidavit, or by deposition, must be factual. Witnesses should guard against expressing opinions, but if stating an opinion cannot be avoided, it must be always qualified

as such. Before giving testimony, the grader should carefully review the certificate in question as well as the inspection notes from which it was prepared. There is no objection to giving related technical information in addition to that appearing upon the certificate, but such information should be based upon the record insofar as possible.

Handling of Grading Fees

Like any other self-supporting business, efficient financial management of the organization depends upon the promptness and regularity of billing and collecting for services rendered. The salaries, travel, equipment, and other expenses of grading operations can be paid only to the extent that receipts will cover disbursements. Hence, it is the concern of every employee of the service to do whatever he can to assist in hastening the billing and collection process. Ordinarily, the responsibility of an individual grader in this respect is discharged upon issuance of a properly prepared and signed certificate and forwarding the certificate copies to his Main Station or Type I Substation office. Fee bills are issued, collections are effected, and deposits are generally made by office employees under direction of the Officer-in-Charge. However, the grader is frequently in a better position to follow up on delinquent accounts, and should render all possible assistance when called upon to do so by his supervisor.

Basic and detailed regulations and instructions governing the handling of collections are available at every grading station office of record. Graders not stationed at Main Stations or Type I Substations may request information concerning collection procedures from their supervisors.

Use and Care of Grading Equipment

The equipment used in applying U. S. Official Grade Marks on carcasses and wholesale cuts of meat is the exclusive property of the U. S. Government. Every chassis is accounted for by serial number, and every insert bearing any part of the official grade marks must likewise be carefully guarded and used for official purposes only. Each grader is held personally responsible for the equipment assigned to him and for its use in accordance with regulations. Branch Instructions outline responsibilities of supervisors and graders with respect to equipment. Any grader who, through carelessness or otherwise, permits unauthorized use of official grading equipment, is subject to severe disciplinary action which may result in separation from the service.

This equipment was developed scientifically by the USDA over a period of many years, and is quite expensive. Therefore, graders and supervisors are expected to protect the equipment from loss or damage while in use and to keep it under lock and key at all other times. Normal wear and tear is expected. Other specific and detailed instructions relating to the use, care and accountability of official grading equipment are contained in the Branch instruction on equipment. Graders shall be charged for loss of equipment, unless it is definitely and satisfactorily established that the utmost precaution was exercised to protect the property.

Hours of Duty, Overtime, and Nonrevenue Producing Time

The first 40 hours of work performed within a period of not more than six consecutive days of the week (including nonrevenue producing time)

constitute the basic work week for meat graders. Sunday is normally considered a nonwork day, but being the first day of the week, any work necessarily performed thereon is considered a part of the regular work week. If graders work on seven days of the week, all work performed on the seventh day (Saturday) shall be at the overtime pay rate of the individual employee even though the total time does not exceed 40 hours.

Supervisors and graders who are in full pay status are paid for 40 hours work each week. If a grader does not work the full 40 hours but is available for assignment, the difference between the hours worked and 40 hours is considered to be nonrevenue producing time, for which they are paid.

Work performed in excess of forty hours in an administrative work week is paid for at overtime rates, or compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay is given to the employee, at his request. Further details concerning hours of duty, overtime and nonrevenue producing time are prescribed in the Branch instructions on "Work Week" and "Overtime and Compensatory Time."

Questions of individual graders regarding any of the information contained in this "Guide for Meat Graders" may be found in Branch instructions and notices; if not, graders should refer their questions to their immediate supervisors.

